DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 282 333 EA 019 429

AUTHOR	Richardson, William M.; Splaine, Pam
TITLE	Discipline Monitoring System: A School Self-Study Project for Montgomery County Public Schools.
INSTITUTION	Montgomery County Board of Education, Rockville, Md.
PUB DATE	86
NOTE	5p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Computer Uses in Education; *Database Management Systems; *Discipline; Microcomputers; *Recordkeeping; Secondary Education; *Student Characteristics; *Suspension; Teacher Characteristics
IDENTIFIERS	*Montgomery County Public Schools MD

ABSTRACT

The Discipline Monitoring System (DMS) is a computer-assisted model allowing individual secondary schools to analyze their disciplinary actions. The Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland) adopted this model to manipulate the following data: who is suspended, who is referred, who makes referrals, characteristics of these persons, and events (including location) surrounding the disciplinary incident. The idea is to discover trends and patterns contributing to disciplinary problems. The model's database management system can be run on schools' administrative microcomputers. Users can enter data from existing school records and generate predefined reports. Source material originates from student referral and suspension forms. Once administrators generate reports, they can discuss findings with staff and seek areas of possible improvement. Administrators can also use the information to make year-to-year comparisons and identify possible new trends. They can also identify student and teacher profiles possibly associated with a disproportionate number of suspensions and incidents. To benefit from the DMS, schools must first examine their disciplinary definitions and procedures. Since the model permits schools to do decentralized self-study projects, central office responsibility is lightened. Such projects will become increasingly feasible as schools are provided with more sophisticated hardware and software. (MLH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Hymes

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED282333

DISCIPLINE MONITORING SYSTEM

A School Self-Study Project

for

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

Dr. William M. Richardson

Dr. Pam Splaine

Division of Administrative Analysis and Audits
Clifford M. Baacke, Director

Department of Educational Accountability
Dr. Steven M. Frankel, Director

EA 019 429

Copyright 1986
Board of Education
Montgomery County Maryland

Discipline Monitoring System

A MODEL

The Discipline Monitoring System (DMS) is a computer assisted model to allow individual secondary schools to perform a self-study analysis of their student discipline actions.

The Department of Educational Accountability (DEA) of the Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools was asked to research the topic of disciplinary actions in the secondary schools and to develop a tracking and reporting system for schools, using available technology. DEA assigned the task to the authors of the DMS who designed a model which would allow the schools to control the study, analysis and solutions of their own discipline-related problems.

Description of the Model

The "model" is actually a set of prototype microcomputer programs which enable the schools to perform self analyses of data which they already have, but which they cannot currently manipulate, to see trends and patterns. Such data include: who is suspended, who is referred, who makes the referral, characteristics of these persons, and events surrounding the disciplinary incident. Specifically, with the model it is possible for school personnel to pursue the following types of questions:

1. What are the characteristics of students who are suspended and those of students who are referred but not suspended? How do they differ?

2. Is there a consistent pattern of incidents which result in suspensions compared with those which don't?

3. Do student characteristics vary in relation to the number of days suspended for similar infractions or in relation to the use of in-school vs. out-of-school suspensions for similar infractions?

4. What are the characteristics of staff who frequently refer students for suspension? Is there a relationship between job assignments, background characteristics and/or experiences which distinguish staff with high referral rates from those with low referral rates?

5. How does the location of incidents affect suspension events? To what extent do suspensions occur in classrooms vs. other areas of the schools? Are some locations or situations catalysts for conflict?

The model uses a data base management system which the schools can run on their own administrative microcomputers. The programs will permit users to enter data from existing school records and generate a number of pre-defined reports. The source material is the student referral forms and the suspension forms which are presently used to record disciplinary infractions. Schools enter the data contained on these forms into their computers. In addition, background student data (e.g., name, student id, address, grade, sex, race, phone number) that reside on the system's mainframe computer is downloaded so that the same data does not have to reentered by school staff.

To analyze these data, by referring to a brief manual developed with the DMS, the school administrators are able to generate a series of predefined reports which will permit them to assess their school in relation to the above questions. And to begin asking even more questions.

Once administrators generate reports, they are able to discuss the findings with their staffs and seek areas of possible improvement. They are able to use the information on an ongoing basis to make year-to-year comparisons and identify what appear to be new trends. They are able to identify student and teacher profiles that appear to be associated with a disproportionate number of suspensions and other disciplinary incidents. The student profiles are also used in parent and staff conferences as well as student conferences with administrators.

Significance of the Model

The DMS provides an overall system that allows school staffs to monitor student discipline problems and actions in their own schools. The system methodology is unique in two ways. First, it uses modern computer technology to assist school personnel. Second, DMS provides the environment for school self-study and analysis using a school's own existing data.

Further, to take full advantage of implementing the DMS, schools by necessity must examine their discipline definitions and procedures for handling discipline situations. The examination is itself a necessary step in the methodological process of school evaluation. This was very often accomplished by more and better communication among all or many of the school staff members allowing better procedures to be followed. Thus, the DMS aided schools developing better procedures for handling disciplinary infractions and in developing better record keeping.

Furthermore, the importance of the DMS goes well beyond the immediate effort just described. To the best of our knowledge, it is one of the first instances of a school system deliberately opting to build a self-study tool for schools to use on an issue of systemwide importance in lieu of conducting a centralized, systemwide study. If this effort is successful it

could point the way to many similar efforts which, like this one, shifts an increasing amount of analytical responsibility away from the Central Office to the schools themselves. Also, the microcomputer provides the possibility for schools to manage the large numbers of data which before took many person weeks. With increased availability of "downloaded" data to schools, such self study projects should become increasingly feasible as schools are provided with increasingly sophisticated hardware or software.

Requirements for Using the System

DMS was developed using Microrim's Rbase database management system. It runs on the PC-DOS operating system on IBM-PC, XT, and AT, and PC-compatible microcomputers. The microcomputer must be equipped with a hard disk (minimum 10 megabytes and 30 is preferable), 512K memory minimum. In addition, a copy of the Rbase software must be installed, and a printer should be available. The DMS is run by a series of programs written in the Rbase language, but is completely menu driven which means that the user will respond to a series of prompts that are displayed in several menus. A brief training session and appropriate technical support was provided to the schools by the developers of the DMS.

Conclusion

The DMS has been used for two semesters. It was piloted in three high schools in the Spring semester last year. The number of pilot schools was increased to nine in the Fall semester of the current year. The pilot schools are using the database to record their infractions, analyze their results and use the predefined reports. They are also finding new uses for the data and seeing new ways to report the data. The school system plans to continue the program and offer the system to more schools next year.